

At Home with the Women's Guild of Arts: gender and professional identity in London studios, c. 1880 - c. 1925

Abstract

This article explores a recently discovered archive, pertaining to the Women's Guild of Arts, in order to deepen understanding of the ways middle-class women, working in the fine and applied arts, constructed artistic identity in London, c.1880-1925. The Women's Guild of Arts was formed as women artists were not allowed to join the Arts and Crafts male-only Art Workers Guild. Analysis of the Women's Guild of Arts archive, alongside the personal memoirs of members of the Guild, show the importance women artists placed on the acquisition of studios, and the significance of studios in building a professional network of female sociability and artistic contacts. Analysis of a sample of studios belonging to Guild members develops knowledge about how professional identity was achieved, and mediated, by women artists. The archive provides the opportunity to consider how both singular, and collective, studio activity was gendered. It reveals the persistent concerns members had about the appropriate use of space in their quest for professional status and examines their views on drawing rooms, exhibitions, male-only spaces, and their adapted use of At Homes in their studios.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the History Department at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Thanks go to Jan Marsh for alerting me to the discovery of the Women's Guild of Arts archive. Sarah Barber, Alan Crawford, Jane Hamlett, Jan Marsh, Stella Moss, Simon Parsons and Lynne Walker were most kind in reading and making thoughtful comments on various drafts. Attendees at a Women's History IHR Seminar paper (31 October 2014) I gave on the topic also made valuable suggestions, as did the anonymous peer reviewers of this article. I would finally like to thank Helen Elletson from the William Morris Society for her kindness in allowing me to regularly visit over the last few years.

Short biographical note

Zoë Thomas is an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded PhD student in the History Department at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her thesis will provide the first comprehensive study of the Women's Guild of Arts.

Correspondence to: Quarry View House, 34 New Street, Shrewsbury, SY3 8JQ

Email: zoemariathomas@gmail.com

On 26 June 1916, Mary A. Sloane, Ethel Everett, Mabel Esplin and Letty Graham opened the doors to 9 St. Paul's Studio, Kensington.¹ 9 St. Paul's Studio was one of a row of eight, built in 1891 and designed to suit the requirements of bachelor artists. The women, all members of the Women's Guild of Arts, (1907-), selected this studio to host a week of lectures, exhibitions, and discussions for fellow members.² The event was organised as an At Home, [Figure 1] a well-established ritual in middle-class and upper-class households in the nineteenth century. Yet this At Home was intended as a studio event, and as such its purpose was subtly altered. This card is part of a collection of At Home cards, Annual Reports, and letters, discovered in a Hammersmith attic in 2011, which make up the Women's Guild of Arts archive, and reveal their extensive reliance on studios. These papers constitute the core source materials for this article, in which the activities of the Women's Guild of Arts are explored for the first time.³

The Guild began in the studio of the fresco painter, Mary Sargent Florence, on the 18 January 1907. At this studio, a letter was composed and sent to many prominent women artists working in the fine and applied arts, which invited them to join the Women's Guild of Arts as founding members. This letter resulted in a crowded meeting on the 21 December 1907 at Clifford's Inn Hall, Fleet Street, London, chaired by the ceramic artist and designer, Mary Seton Watts, where the first official meeting of the newly-formed executive committee took place.⁴ Throughout its existence the purpose of the Women's Guild of Arts was contested. Concerns ranged from worries it was growing to be predominantly a lecturing society, to opposing fears about 'the danger of becoming too social.'⁵ The Annual Report of 1913 states its material aims were to:

...gather together representatives of the different arts, to be of use to the members of the Guild, a usefulness which partly consists of our encouraging each other to think in common...and to do everything possible to bring ourselves in touch with the best thought, the best work, of the world outside our circle... We must meet, we must discuss, we must brush up against other people...we have already accomplished something of our immediate aim, which is, to socialize our art, as it were, by some sort of record of work done year by year, and by an exchange of experience and of thought.⁶

Members were required to demonstrate that they were established in their field and they had to be approved by the committee. It was important to keep standards high, otherwise it was thought they would 'lose the kind of influence we wish to have, and become a mediocrity.'⁷

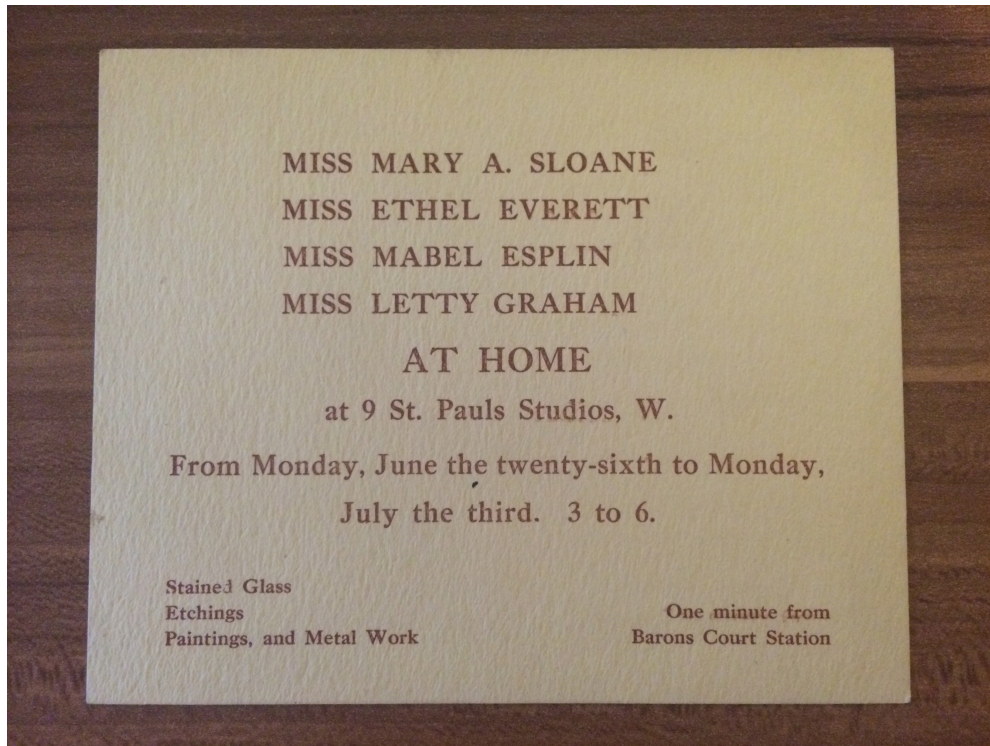


Figure 1. At Home card for combined studio event, run by Miss Mary A. Sloane, Miss Ethel Everett, Miss Mabel Esplin and Miss Letty Graham. With kind thanks to the William Morris Society

The social makeup of the Women's Guild of Arts was predominantly middle-class, with members from professional, trading and artistic families. Composed of different generational groups over its lifespan, it fluctuated around 60 members. The Committee included Mary Seton Watts who was Hon. Chairman between 1907 until 1914, when she assumed the title of Hon. President.⁸ May Morris, the embroidery designer and jeweller, was the first Hon. Secretary, Chairman from 1915 onwards, and an integral member of the Guild. Her mother Jane Morris was listed as a founding member.⁹ Mary A. Sloane, the etcher and engraver, was the Hon. Secretary (1909-1924) with other Hon. Secretaries assisting her at times. The Guild also included the painters Marianne Stokes, Annie Swynnerton, Marie Stillman, Kate Bunce and Evelyn De Morgan; the bookbinder, Katharine Adams; and the house decorator, Agnes Garrett. There were notable upper-class members such as the sculptor Feodora Gleichen and tempera painter Christiana Herringham (Vice-Chair 1907-1909). The decision made by these women to join the Guild demonstrates their belief in the ethos of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The Women's Guild of Arts papers repeatedly affirm their collective wish to raise the status of the applied arts. The paper roll, alongside listing the names of members, stated the wide range of media that Guild members worked in. Guild members worked in many areas of the arts, in

particular stained glass, oil paints, illustration, and embroidery, but members also listed their profession as woodcarvers, sculptors, and metalworkers amongst others.

The Women's Guild of Arts was set up as a reaction to its founding members being denied membership of the Art Workers' Guild. The male-only Art Workers' Guild was founded in 1884 to encourage excellence in the applied arts. Anthea Callen has problematised the gender division of male and female proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement, emphasising the Art Workers' Guild's refusal to accept women members until late into the twentieth century. No attempt was made to formally integrate women 'at this central, influential level.'¹⁰ The absence of the Women's Guild of Arts in current historiography makes the discovery of its archive a fascinating research opportunity to consider how women artists reacted to this forced separation. This analysis will reconfigure understanding of the Arts and Crafts Movement by developing knowledge about the lived experiences of its key female propagators.

In the last thirty years academic literature has highlighted the professional opportunities opening up for middle-class women in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Focus has been applied predominantly to the role of women as clerical workers, nurses and in the teaching professions.¹¹ Clarissa Campbell Orr, Deborah Cherry, Janice Helland, Griselda Pollock and Lynne Walker have made a significant contribution through developing understanding about the complex relationship between women artists and professional identity.¹² Yet the term 'professional' remains difficult to adequately define when discussing the artistic activity of middle-class women during this period, as many women artists did not financially support themselves and often worked part time, and in the home.

Caroline Dakers has researched how male artists in West London used studio houses as a way to build reputation during the nineteenth century.¹³ This article expands this work, with specific focus on members of the Women's Guild of Art, to show that women were also acquiring studios. Analysis of the efforts middle-class women made to acquire studios, and how these spaces helped 'nurture aspiration and build reputation', provides an alternative way to develop understanding about how middle-class women artists delineated their professional activity.¹⁴ The studio was an important site in which discourses of domesticity, gender and professional identity blurred due to its hybrid nature. The article also considers the collective experiences of the Women's Guild of Arts and the importance members placed on studio sociability as a key part of their working life. Concerns about gender dictated their use of space, and this article examines group exhibitions, the drawing room, and the Art Worker's Guildhall. It also develops understanding of At Homes practice and how this was adapted from domestic usage, to a tool by some artists, for professional activity.

London studios

During the mid-to-late-nineteenth century middle-and upper-class society shifted in its attitude towards artists. Artists no longer had to visit homes through the tradesman's entrance. They became a valued asset in social circles, through their role as purveyors of cultural knowledge. Demand for the building of studios grew. Frequently constructed in the Queen Anne style, they replicated the works of architects such as Philip Webb, Richard Norman Shaw and E. W. Godwin. Those artists with the most prominent reputations often designed their own studios. Frederic Leighton, painter, and President of the Royal Academy (1878-1896), displayed his wealth and reputation through the opulent grandeur of his studio home Leighton House. Artists favoured Chelsea, Kensington and Hampstead as these areas were semi-rural and had sites available for building on at reasonable costs whilst still 'close to the West End and the picture-buying public.'¹⁵ The Pre-Raphaelite circle appropriated Chelsea from the 1860s and groups of studios were built there into the early-twentieth century. Kensington became increasingly popular after the growth of the South Kensington Museum complex in the 1860s. Although suitable sites became scarcer in the early-twentieth century, with the price of developments continuing to rise, the artistic status of Chelsea was confirmed in the 1921 population census. This noted that the area had the greatest concentration of male artists, at 9 per 1000 men. The next highest was Hampstead with 6 per 1000 men.¹⁶

In literature, art, and public consciousness, the role of women as working studio participants remained limited. The Women's Guild of Arts archive however attests to a group of women actively pursuing careers in their rented, bought, and borrowed West London studios. Nicola Moorby has argued that women artists consistently had to overcome the 'patriarchal stereotype of the mediocre 'amateur' lady, dabbling before marriage.'¹⁷ Studio spaces became an important site in which women could shape their professional identity, and physically validate their commitment to the arts. Members of the Guild tended to have been immersed in an environment, from childhood, in which arts and crafts were increasingly perceived as respectable pursuits, as opposed to trade. A number of members were born into the blossoming West London studio scene, which made them aware of the need to have an allocated workspace. Guild member, the painter, Estella Canziani, reflected nostalgically about the studios she had visited in her memoir *Round about Three Palace Green* (1939):

The Alma-Tademas' house and garden fascinated me...The glow on the brass stairs led into an enchanted studio with translucent marble windows through which shone a subdued beautiful light. Both Lady Alma-Tadema and Miss Alma-Tadema sometimes showed their small pictures.¹⁸

The Val Prinseps' house in Holland Park Road was magnificent, the entrance was of gold paneling and the rooms were filled with *objets d'art*, furniture, tapestry, and pictures. This road was a colony of artists. There were many tea-parties in the garden, and while we children played by the pool of water ... artists dropped in for a chat.¹⁹

Finances, class and familial associations were critical in giving Women's Guild of Arts members the opportunity to acquire their studios. Reliance on these factors dictated the ability of many artists to engage in the artistic community at different stages in their lives. Guild member, Feodora Gleichen, studied in her father's studio at St. James Palace, then spent her career working in this space surrounded by her work and her dogs. [Figure 2.] Guild member, Evelyn De Morgan, would flit between Trafalgar Studios in Manresa Road alongside periodic painting trips to Italy.²⁰ Guild member, Sarah Prideaux, resourcefully used her studio to hold classes to instruct pupils to learn the art of bookbinding. The painter Christabel Cockerell, who was not a Guild member, described her studio house in North London as 'a perfect painting room in which comfort and utility are happily combined.'²¹ Designed by her husband, the sculptor, George Frampton, the house included studios for them both to work in.



Figure 2. Lady Feodora Georgina Maud Gleichen by Unknown photographer. Photographic print, 1905 or after © National Portrait Gallery, London / unknown collection

Guild member, the painter, Rose Barton, enjoyed the cityscape that Chelsea provided for her, and is known to have rented a studio for a winter in Glebe Place. She wrote in her memoir *Familiar London* (1904) that the area was ‘a happy hunting-ground for artists, professional and amateur.’²² She was pleased she was able to carry a ‘sketching stick’ or an easel without attracting much public attention, ‘and beyond a small crowd of interested playmates have suffered no inconvenience whatever.’²³ Rose was not alone in her decision to rent a studio in Glebe Place. A fellow Guild member, the decorative painter, Emily Ford, also maintained a studio there, as did Guild member the metalworker, Letty Graham. The houses on Glebe Place had triple height ceilings and large windows, which flooded the studios with natural light. The

opportunity to work there was advantageous for their careers, as it was well known as an area favoured by artists. Dora Meeson Coates, a fellow artist, neighbour and friend of Emily Ford, said Emily's studio was indispensable, as it 'was a meeting-ground for artists, suffragists, people who *did* things.'²⁴ Studios held multifaceted importance, providing space to plan and enact a range of artistic but also political activities. Guild member, the stained-glass artist and noted suffragette, Mary Lowndes, used her residency at Brittany Studios, No. 259 Kings Road, Chelsea, both as her place of work but also for meetings of the Artists' Suffrage League until its move to No. 27 Trafalgar Square, Chelsea in 1917.

Several other Guild members enjoyed comparable privileges in their studio choices. A five-minute stroll from Glebe Place was Cheyne Walk, also a vibrant area for artistic activity. Guild members appropriated studios in this area as well. Elinor Hallé, the enamellist and medalist worked from No. 8 Upper Cheyne Row. Fellow Guild member, Mary Sargent Florence, was at No. 1 Cheyne Walk. She moved to No. 43 Glebe Place in 1913.²⁵ Cheyne Walk was developed as a small group of studio houses, designed by the Arts and Crafts architect C.R. Ashbee, with bedrooms and shared servant quarters in the basement. Ashbee built No. 37 for himself, his mother and sisters in 1893-4, a studio house, which he and his wife then moved into, and a studio project at No. 38 Cheyne Walk in 1898 for the still-life painter, Clara Christian. Ashbee also designed No. 75 in 1901-2 for Mrs. William Hunt, an art collector, and No. 71 in 1912-13 for Adeline Trier, a flower painter.²⁶ Many clients of Ashbee's studios were women artists and there was a market for both single and married middle-class women wanting to live and work in these properties.²⁷ Women artists were involved in acquiring purpose-built artists studios, identical to those used by their male counterparts. Furthermore, there was a demonstrable concentration of women artists around particular areas. Community, organised along professional lines, was a key factor in the acquisition of studios by women.

Gender and studio life

Members of the Women's Guild of Arts were busily carving out professional careers in a variety of artistic fields, and these practices required a combination of different studio spaces, tools, and amenities. How the studio was used was dictated by the demands of every day life, marriage, family and societal expectations. Women artists had to carefully coordinate time in the studio alongside domestic and social duties. A diary entry by Margaret Wright in 1898, cousin to Guild member, Kate Bunce, shows how precious time in the studio was. Kate worked in her studio every morning, as on a practical level daylight was needed, but also because she was expected to give the rest of the day to social and cultural activities, including regular theatre going.²⁸ Although this suggests a comfortable lifestyle, it is important to consider the pressure

women felt to maintain *status quo* and of appearing accomplished in several pursuits, which could take away from studio time. Walter Sickert berated two female colleagues for neglecting their artistic development in favour of social and domestic activities.²⁹ Roberta White has suggested that the demands of women's lives were directly at odds with the perceived demands of art as the needs of children and the duties of domestic life constantly interrupted their work.³⁰

Those Guild members who did marry, regularly married male artists, and the studio was then reformed to suit the requirements of the married couple who would regularly enter into artistic partnership. Guild member, the sculptor, Gertrude Bayes, and her sculptor husband, Gilbert Bayes, had two studios in their garden at No. 4 Greville Place. Guild member, Louise Powell, and her husband Alfred Powell, shared a studio for their pottery work at No. 20 Red Lion Square. The Watts studios at Limnerslease was also at the centre of G. F. Watts and Guild member Mary Seton Watts's professional and home life. The Guild members who did marry typically married someone connected to their artistic circle and who would hopefully understand their need to have a studio. Although the studios of married couples were often combined, this space still allowed women artists to, at least partially, demarcate their professional and domestic lives.

Guild member Edith Brearey Dawson's daughter, painter Rhoda Bickerdike, has written about how her parents, the painters and metalworkers, Edith and Nelson, before having their two daughters, lived at Wentworth Studios in the 1890s, where they 'camped out, having their kippers cooked on the studio stove.' It was described by Rhoda as 'a very well-staged studio' that was 'hung with paintings and metal work, beaten copper dishes, a candelabra with a sailing ship, doors with hand-wrought iron hinges... all common objects made beautifully.' Yet Rhoda noted that Edith found it hard having to adapt to 'work all and every day, and missed very much the companionship of her cheerful girl friends, now so far away'.³¹ Wentworth Studios was emblematic of their early attempts at professionalism, but it was also through necessity their sole domestic space. Their artistic partnership brought financial success, which allowed them to move into their first family home, the Mulberry Tree, Manresa Road, which was considered to be more appropriate for family life. In their new home, Edith had her own 'workroom.' The following extract about this 'workroom', discusses Edith's daily working activity as a metalworker:

One remembers her sitting there, cutting out gold foil, or grinding colours, or putting on the raw enamel usually with a nib in a penholder; or standing in front of the furnace with her tongs, putting in a tray of small pieces of shaped copper, to be mounted as pendants or brooches when finished.³²

According to Rhoda, the family would visit Edith's workroom before breakfast each day, and as such, her workspace and her professional activities could still be connected with the domestic daily life of the Dawson family.

Arthur Ransome's *Bohemia in London* (1907), a semi-biographical account of his first years in the capital, provides an opportunity to peer into the studio of an unmarried member of the Women's Guild of Arts, through his description of painter and illustrator, Pamela 'Pixie' Colman Smith's, studio in London. She held evening parties once a week, even keeping a visitor book to record visitors.³³ [Figure 3.] Ransome described her studio as 'a mad room out of a fairytale.'³⁴ Great emphasis is placed on the materiality of the rooms, as quintessential examples of the artistic scene. The studio had dark green walls adorned with drawings, etchings and pastel sketches, the tables with 'bottles of painting inks' and a big blue sofa upon which a 'broadly whiskered picture-dealer' pored over a book of Japanese prints.³⁵ Aside from this convincing display of an artistic lifestyle, the space abounded in its eccentricity, with cigarette boxes, incense, heaps of crimson silks, a medley of Eastern pottery and Indian goods, a grand piano, and endless candles. There was even a 'woolly monkey perched ridiculously on a pile of portfolios', which appeared to grin 'at the cast of a woman's head.'³⁶ This space demonstrates how a studio could materially transform a woman artist into a known artistic figure. It expressed the artistic career intentions of its inhabitant, by physically proving they were not partaking in a hobby. Pixie's professional identity was also irrevocably tied up in a mass of personal material possessions and objects in her studio.



Figure 3. Page from the Visitor Book of Pamela Colman Smith. Illustration by Alphaeus Cole.
Collection of S. R. Kaplan. Further reproduction prohibited

The memoir of Guild member Rose Barton provides another insight into studio life. She asked a flower girl she met whilst walking around London to sit for her in her studio. The girl was ‘much pleased at the project’ and informed Rose ‘all the other girls were ‘fit to be tied with envy.’³⁷ There is a vivid impression of the busy working environment:

She had never been in a studio before, and all the time she was sitting I saw her eyes wandering round the room, taking in everything. At last she said triumphantly, ‘I knowed you to be a lydy the first day you came down to paint.’ ‘How so?’ I asked. ‘Well,’ said she, ‘when you had done your painting you packed up your things and carried them off yourself.’ From the way she said it, I imagine there had been a heated argument over this point.³⁸

The exchange between Rose and the flower girl shows that class position remained a constant fixture in the studio, alongside demonstrating public intrigue in Rose’s position as a painter.

Rose Barton also detailed her enjoyment of the domestic side to studio life. She expressed her pleasure at ‘the cosy fire in one’s studio...with the kettle on the hob.’³⁹ She perceived all ‘minor grievances’ in the public terrain to be forgotten when:

...two or three of us, after trying to sketch on the Embankment in the short winter evenings, till one’s fingers were too much numbed to hold the brush, used to get back to a cheerful fire and discuss one’s failures over tea and rounds of buttered toast and muffins. Only those initiated into ‘studio tea’ can know to what a pitch of excellence toast and muffins can rise!⁴⁰

This emphasis on ‘studio tea’ demonstrates the significance of having a designated space to meet in, and its ability to simultaneously provide companionship and artistic networking opportunities.

The studio experiences of Guild member Estella Canziani also verifies that studio access allowed women to engage in a range of artistic social activities. Estella’s mother, the painter, Louisa Starr, hosted social events such as an annual ‘Show Sunday’ in her studio, just before the sending in date for the Royal Academy Annual Exhibition. Her studio would be ‘crowded with visitors.’⁴¹ Marion Sambourne, part of the artistic community through her husband Linley’s work as an illustrator, would tour studios with her husband, where the paintings destined for submission would be displayed.⁴² Estella continued the Show Sunday tradition during the Women’s Guild of Arts existence. The well-known essayist, E. V. Lucas, described it as mimicking a ‘country cottage in London’, as Estella would light fires in the studio with wood from the garden. One meeting in 1914 was particularly memorable: ‘members of nine nations, including Germans, met in friendliness for tea in my studio. The barriers were forgotten in mutual admiration of one another’s works.’⁴³

Although the Women’s Guild of Arts archive shows that many members had access to studios, tensions remained unresolved about women artists. If a woman was portrayed in the studio, her expected role continued to be as a model sitter, where she was significant through her beauty. Ransome’s *Bohemia in London* demonstrates the complexities in understanding contemporary views on gender and the studio. A chapter titled ‘In the studios’ presumes the studio to be a masculine space. The artist is male, ‘his coat off ready for work’, absorbed in painting his model during the day, ‘slashing in the rough work’, he would then spend the evening in one of London’s many male-only artists’ clubs.⁴⁴ The woman presented in the studio was as usual, the model, but here she is also presented as helping with practical duties traditionally associated with being a wife, such as making food, and providing companionable chatter.⁴⁵ In the chapter ‘A Chelsea Evening’, Ransome details a bohemian evening in the

capital, at the studio of Women's Guild of Arts member, Pixie Colman Smith, under the pseudonym of 'Gypsy'. This is where Ransome felt he could 'meet the best poets and painters and men and women of spirit in the town.'⁴⁶ The two chapters clash in their juxtaposition of gendered roles in the studio. Pixie however demonstrates that though complex gendered ideologies existed, women were subverting these ideals, and were an active part of the artistic cityscape.

The gender of the artist often dictated the way social interactions took place in the studio. During an evening Ransome spent at Pixie's studio he made friends with 'Benn' (who is likely to have been the painter, etcher, and engraver Alphaeus Cole). Benn asked Ransome to visit his studio, 'he gave me a card with his address upon it, for which he had to ask his wife.' Social etiquette and domestic details were seen as a task for his artist wife. Benn also got overexcited with a 'gigantic two-edged sword' hanging on the studio wall and tried to swing for it. His wife 'instantly brought him to sense and saved the place from devastation. Instead, he described the picture he was painting.'⁴⁷ Within the artistic community, broader gendered social ideals were reinscribed. Married women artists would often have a separate gendered role to that of their artist husbands, with women being seen as the primary social organisers and restorer of decorum. Ransome, in his autobiography, detailed a time when Pegotty (Alphaeus Cole's wife):

...who was strong on the social side of a painter's life, gave an 'at home' in their studio for the benefit of some American visitor who was likely to buy a picture...I used to go round and do my part in making the buyer feel that he was lucky to get it.⁴⁸

Many members of the Women's Guild of Arts, such as Pixie Colman Smith, Estella Canziani, and Rose Barton, remained unmarried, and often relied on family support, or in some cases, their own income, to rent a studio. The studio spaces of single women could be shared if friends, or other members of the family were also artists. Guild member, the woodcarver Julia Bowley, before marriage, shared her studio in Reading with her friend Miss Cromwell, c. 1897, where the public could view specimens of the women's works ranging from 'tea-trays to floral panels'.⁴⁹ Guild members and sisters, illustrator, Alice Bolingbroke Woodward and her sister, metalworker, Ellen Caroline Woodward, regularly shared studios a close walk from their family home throughout their lives. Guild members and family members, sculptor, Ellen Mary Rope and her niece, sculptor, Dorothy Anne Aldrich Rope, shared a studio, whilst Ellen's niece, stained glass window maker, Margaret Edith Aldrich Rope, held a studio nearby. Their network of studios is depicted by the stained glass artist Clare Dawson. [Figure 4]



Figure 4. The studio network of the Rope family in London as depicted by Clare Dawson.

Collection of Arthur Rope

As the number of women artists working and residing in studios increased, so did concern about respectability, both in terms of propriety and the correct employment of servants. This was partially solved through the watchful gaze of caretakers, who were also of practical use, at least theoretically, in removing the need to clean. Women's Guild of Arts member, the woodcarver and leather worker, Eleanor Rowe, lived on Pembroke Road, London, where there was a cluster of studios set around a central courtyard area. The studios were enclosed within an ornamental gatehouse that also housed a caretaker. The caretaker would vet any comings and goings, and, in this patriarchal role, could have been seen as helpful for preserving the reputation of female artists. Rose Barton mentioned having a caretaker, but was dismissive of his role. She described the studio as:

charming as regards light and furniture, but handicapped with a caretaker whose only object in life was to save himself trouble. Nothing was ever dusted except by me. In vain I used to expostulate. He put on a dignified and injured look, and assured me he swep' this and swep' that the day before.⁵⁰

This quotation is illuminating in Rose's assertion of her class authority, whilst simultaneously maintaining a sense of domestic expertise and appreciation of the choice of furniture. In comparison however, Guild member, the painter and etcher, Julia Alsop displayed pleasure at having a caretaker to do the cleaning in her studio, giving her time to focus on her mezzotint engravings.⁵¹

Concerns about respectability could even be extended to include temporary studios set up in the drawing room. Estella Canziani discussed how her painter mother Louisa, before marriage, was permitted by her parents to turn the family drawing room into a painting studio but was, in the words of Estella, 'obliged to have my grandmother sitting in this room with her even when her sitters were being painted.'⁵² Estella's tone is accepting of this matriarchal supervision from her grandmother to her mother, but the constant observation must have made it difficult to build an artistic identity at this early stage in Louisa's career. Louisa's drawing room experiences were far-removed from an increased societal understanding of a bohemian avant-garde lifestyle being propagated for male artists, which are demonstrated in a letter sent by the architect Edward Channing Clarke to Louisa. He invited her to visit him in his garret, and promised it was ready for 'the reception of ladies. Pipes put away, drawing boards out of sight...The best set of tea things available borrowed for the evening.'⁵³

Adapting domestic space

For many artists, male and female, a modest lifestyle and an ability to make do with creating professional space in the domestic interior were expected. Marion Sambourne wrote how Linley worked from home, his easel placed close to the big south-facing window in the William Morris papered drawing room as the house was not big enough, nor were they wealthy enough, for Linley to have a separate studio.⁵⁴ When their daughter married the old night-nursery was transformed into a 'study-workroom.'⁵⁵ The drawing room was ideologically visualised as a place where middle and upper-class women would receive social calls during this period and held problematic connotations of entertainment, leisure, and the *dilettante* artist, and as such a separate studio was usually preferred. Walter Sickert's dictum was to 'avoid the drawing-room' at all costs. The drawing room has been problematised in Nicola Moorby's research as she has

shown that many artists did use the drawing room, adapting this domestic space for their professional requirements. When the painter Vanessa Stephens moved into a house with her sister Virginia after the death of their father in 1904, the rooms became 'their own.' The drawing room was successfully re-designated by the sisters as a space for professional activity.⁵⁶

Some members of the Women's Guild of Arts worked from home. Guild member Dorothy Woollard worked firstly at home in Bristol and then from a flat near St. Pancras.⁵⁷ As an etcher she required little space, which may have contributed to her decision not to rent a studio. Guild member, the embroideress, Eve Simmonds lived and worked, along with her husband William, out of financial necessity, on the top floor of fellow Guild member, the pottery painter, Louise Powell's house in Hampstead c.1915. Here they would prepare works for the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society exhibitions.⁵⁸ Eve and William, who were puppet makers as well, would also hold puppet shows, in 'the drawing room of a large house in the West End.'⁵⁹ Guild member Feodora Gleichen's sister, a painter called Helena, managed to take on her own cottage to paint in whilst training, until her mother learnt of this and forced her to employ a charlady so that Helena was not alone at night.⁶⁰ The transient nature of these practices has meant that domestic spaces, especially the drawing room, often used as sites of professional activity, tend to be forgotten, as they didn't usually influence the physical formation of the household. Lack of knowledge about this has resulted in a formulaic understanding of Victorian and Edwardian households, and a lack of recognition of the professional activities of many artists.

Painting and stained glass window making tended to require studio access but other forms of applied arts could be pursued within the home. The decision by Guild members whether or not to rent studios dependent on their craft is not something discussed in the Women's Guild of Arts' archive, and Guild members across the applied arts rented studio spaces, alongside using spaces at home. Although the studio played a significant role in the development of a sense of professional identity, use of the home could also help in the construction of an artistic career. Elizabeth Crawford has discussed how Guild member the house decorator Agnes Garrett, and her cousin Rhoda, 'must have been conscious that their home was their best showroom.'⁶¹ Even though they had a warehouse, an office was kept at their house, 2 Gower Street, and demonstrates awareness at the power this domestic space had in showing off their work to their customers.

Guild member Estella Canziani's mother, Louisa, spent time painting in Italy, yet it was important to her to still have a studio room. She stayed with family and a room was adapted in the home so that she had designated space to paint. Her future husband Enrico romantically pursued her through the careful creation of the studio in the domestic by 'turning a room upstairs

into a studio.’⁶² In later years temporary studios continued to be created for Louisa to work in. On one such trip to visit friends she wrote:

Lord Aberdeen is having a studio run up for me. This afternoon I was taken by the whole party to it. It is built most substantially of two thicknesses of wood with hay between to make it warm, is heated with a stove, and it has a good light, and in fact is so good it would do for a permanent studio for any one. It is most comfortably carpeted and I am quite longing to get to work.⁶³

Louisa consistently asserted the need to have a demarcated space to create art in. After marriage, Louisa and Enrico moved to 14 Russell Square.⁶⁴ Louisa did not have a studio, which unsettled her, as she had to paint in the drawing room. The desire to have her own studio, and her willingness to move to fulfill this need, consumed her thoughts. The following anecdote by Estella provides a fascinating insight:

My mother needed a better studio than her adapted drawing room, and was always looking for a house. One night she dreamed of an ideal house, but she thought no more of the dream. When one day, driving in Kensington Palace Gardens, she saw a board up, ‘House to Let’, and recognized the house and the surroundings of her dream, she telegraphed to my father, who had reached Paris on his way to Italy: ‘Found a house, come back,’ and he returned.

The couple purchased No. 3 Palace Green in 1886 and two years later Estella was born ‘in this studio world corner of Kensington.’⁶⁵ Louisa ‘built the studio’⁶⁶ in the courtyard to the house, and could finally ‘work alone in a real studio’ which ‘was a great advantage.’⁶⁷ Although caution needs to be taken when evaluating a treasured family anecdote, Louisa seems to have had little concern about asking her husband travel back from Paris in the quest to find the perfect studio home. For those women with means, and a supportive family, a studio could be a crucial part of establishing a professional career.

Collective activity

Tensions about gender, in relation to the emerging position of women as professional artists, become more distinct when looking at the collective energies of the Women’s Guild of Arts. General members would attend around six to ten official Women’s Guild of Arts meetings,

predominantly lectures, each year at the premises of the Art Workers' Guild, first at Clifford's Inn Hall and then No. 6 Queen Square from 1914. The Art Workers' Guild was connected to the Women's Guild of Arts: both through its responsibility for the Women's Guild of Art's conception through its segregation; but also through the relationship the two Guilds maintained with each other. The Women's Guild of Arts relationship with male artists was complex. At the Annual Meeting at Clifford's Inn Hall on 5 December 1912 it was proposed 'That men be eligible for election as Honorary Associates to the Women's Guild of Arts.'⁶⁸ This amendment concerned many of the founding members, a number of whom were integrally involved in the suffrage movement, such as Mary Sargent Florence and Emily Ford. The proposed amendment resulted in a written request to have an extra-ordinary General Meeting on the 28 February 1913. At this meeting the 'principle of admitting Honorary Associates was re-affirmed.'⁶⁹ In a Committee meeting held later that year on 24 October, a scribbled note in the margin to the minute book reveals that many of the same members who had been concerned about male involvement, dramatically left mid-meeting, due to concerns about 'the way the guild was managed.' These members then resigned, which the Committee accepted 'with regret.'⁷⁰

Edith Brearey Dawson, in 1908, expressed her keenness for her fellow women members to meet regularly at the Art Workers' Guild premises. She was personally connected through her husband, Nelson, an Art Workers' Guild member. Edith stressed the importance of 'the fine old hall with its many associations, and what a dignifying and benign influence such a place of meeting would have.'⁷¹ The fact that the Art Workers' Guild allowed the Women's Guild of Arts to meet at their premises, suggests a shift from its earlier attitude towards women.⁷² Meetings at these premises tended to be haphazard, due to 'temptingly offered' meetings from other societies.⁷³ In 1917, Guild member, the illustrator and wood carver, Phyllis Gardner called the Art Workers' Guild Hon. Secretary H.J.L.J Massé a 'nuisance' because he had, again, disrupted plans by needing the hall last minute.⁷⁴ Yet Edith still felt the opportunity to access this space outweighed the 'poor substitute' of having 'to wander homelessly from one member's workplace to another, ever changing and having no where to call our own.'⁷⁵ This was a widespread issue, as women's art organisations did not tend to have their own purpose-built accommodation, although rare examples do exist such as The Glasgow Society of Lady Artists (1882-1971) who purchased a house to meet in.⁷⁶

The Annual Report of 1910 however argued that: 'six or seven meetings in the year are not enough to keep the Guild going... We want to see more of each others work, know more of each others outlook... listening to lectures at such long intervals will severely effect this.' It lamented their inability to have their own 'permanent home' in which they could meet:

in the social way desired, as the men art-workers do, but the conditions are different. For the present meeting at each others houses now and then seems to be the most practical and simple thing to do... one of the points about the social gatherings suggested if we can establish them, is that members should bring, quite informally, any work they have in had that they care to discuss with their fellows, we cannot but be aware that men meet much more at studios and clubs than women do and while keeping in mind that we are a Guild of workers and not a social club I think it is in this way that we may expect our guild to develop and fulfill the expectations of its founders.⁷⁷

The Annual Report of 1912 also discussed the emerging problem of members not wishing to speak about their own work. There was a list of all the members asked to do so who had repeatedly refused. It was decided to hold more 'informal demonstration meetings in studios at which some members might be more inclined to speak about their work than in a larger hall.'⁷⁸ Refusal to speak in this hall, almost certainly to have been the premises of the Art Workers' Guild shows the women's concern about being placed in this masculine hegemonic space and expected to assert their professional knowledge. From this period onwards there was a concerted effort to hold regular meetings in members' personal studios and homes, alongside meetings at the Art Workers' Guilds premises.⁷⁹ In the absence of their own Guildhall, studios constituted a framework of social interaction, where women could exhibit their professionalism to each other. The spatiality of the studio was important due to its unthreatening size and the semi-private, relaxed atmosphere it encouraged. That year there was at least five official studio meetings, alongside a garden party hosted by Estella Canziani, and a private exhibition at Lindsay Hall.

The Women's Guild of Arts archive reveals there was an expectation members would have some access to a studio. A 1913 meeting noted that lithographer Louise Jacobs was unable to give a studio meeting as requested until she obtained a larger studio.⁸⁰ A letter from 1915 between Guild member the painter Maud Beddington and Mary A. Sloane shows Maud's hope that Mary's wide network of artist friends could help her let her studio. It demonstrates the extent to which the women relied on each other in their acquisition of professional spaces:

I am most anxious to let my studio. If you hear of anyone wanting a studio or dwelling of the kind? I know you will mention mine? I am asking two shillings a week but would take less if I could find a nice tenant! Studio, bedroom (with one double and one single bed in it) small kitchen and lavatory, telephone, electric light... stove. To be let furnished by the quarter.⁸¹

A similar letter was sent to Mary in 1923, by Julia Alsop, in which she asked for help in renting a studio she had shared with her husband. She detailed its lack of sleeping accommodation, that there was a caretaker, and that it could be let furnished or unfurnished. If let unfurnished this needed to wait until her husband got back from Africa.⁸² If Guild members struggled to obtain studio access, fellow Guild members would often offer use of their own workspaces. 9 St. Paul's studio, rented by Guild member, painter, Maud Beddington was regularly used for group events. A letter also exists in which Guild member, decorative painter, E. K. Martyn, thanked Estella Canziani for her generosity in suggesting she could work in Estella's studio. She refused, as she felt 'I oughtn't to impose such a lot of myself' but said she would agree to use Estella's studio in future if she had 'necessity for a model.'⁸³ Members of the Women's Guild of Arts were keen to share their studio spaces to enable fellow Guild members to pursue their careers.

There were persistent concerns about how to behave as a guild of women. This was often discussed in relation to how best to use the spaces available to them, and the attached social stigmas spaces held. Studios were useful for members, as they did not have overtly feminine, leisure associations, like the drawing room, which it was feared could degrade the Guild's status if they met collectively in this space. In a letter Edith Brearey Dawson wrote to May Morris in 1908 she indicates the seriousness with which she wished the Guild to be perceived in society:

...we are women whose work makes daylight and daytime valuable, and also the holding of the meetings in the evening would prevent the feeling of 'drawing room meeting' to which I think we may all object. I write with the interest of our new Guild at heart, with the hope and ambitions all its members must feel. That we may be a united body of women art workers, looking at things broadly and responsibly and that we may turn into a strong and influential Guild, whose voice will be a real power in the land.⁸⁴

It is interesting to note Edith's description of the Guild as a united body of 'workers', alongside her desire for the Guild to remove itself from associations with domesticity. The need to meet in a professional space, and at the correct time, was essential for these workingwomen.⁸⁵

Studios were valuable due to their hybrid nature. They evoked connotations of a professional artist working within, enabled women to work undisturbed, but also allowed women to become involved in processes of buying and selling, through meeting patrons and notable artistic figures. Women could, to an extent, recreate domesticity on their own terms. These were spaces in which to meet to eat socially, sometimes to sleep in, post could be delivered, and they required cleaners and caretakers. Studios could still be connected to the family, the husband and the home; thus integrating their lifestyles with accepted societal conventions. Indeed, Louisa Starr even used to walk up and down the studio with Estella in her

arms, singing her to sleep.⁸⁶ The close physical network of their studios in London allowed Women's Guild of Arts members to build the power of their circle of members, to invite and host speakers, and provided professional fulfillment. Studios also facilitated the organisation of last-minute meetings, although a letter to Mary A. Sloane in 1925 lamented the inability to arrange a studio meeting to settle financial accounts.⁸⁷ Guild members developed numerous and varied connections with each other, often sharing studio spaces, family ties and working in the same workshops.⁸⁸

The predominantly private nature of the Women's Guild of Arts meetings mirrored the tactics adopted by the Art Workers' Guild, and of the traditionally private nature of guilds more generally. Yet it also attests to a desire not to get drawn into public debates about the position of women in society and the art world. As a collective, the semi-private nature of the studio became of utmost importance, as crucially, studios did not mark out the women to society as a separate group. Members did not wish to publically demonstrate their separation as women artists. They were concerned this could undermine their participation as contestants in London's male dominated art market. A letter from May Morris and Christiana Herringham, in which they responded to an invitation to exhibit as a Guild at the Edinburgh Exhibition in the Women's Section, is valuable. They firmly reply they are unable to accept as:

We object as a matter of principle to women's sections in Art exhibitions. There can surely be no doubt that the work of artists should be judged without regard to questions of sex. And moreover there is reason to fear the association of Fine Art exhibits with those that have to do with the domestic occupations of women will tend to depreciate the importance of the former. The standard of Art for women will be debased and prices lowered, women being forced to work for less terms than men will accept.⁸⁹

Edith Brearey Dawson, in a letter to May, added 'I feel we should be making a mistake to exhibit anywhere else as a body for business. Several women workers I know wish to protest against Women's Art Exhibitions and I do very much myself.'⁹⁰ Edith had 'heard several members of the Women's Guild of arts speak very strongly against the Guild being used as an exhibition society or for business purposes at all.'⁹¹ May Morris said in the Chairman's speech of 1914, that the Guild did not 'court public attention.'⁹² An early draft of the Annual Report of 1912 also stated:

...we are agreed that we are not banded together to show what we can do alone – an isolated society in the community bound together by Sex rather than by Art. As I understand it we are a body of women joined together as such, men already having their own organisations, to do what they are doing, i.e. to keep at the highest level the arts by which and for which we live.⁹³

A twist here is the decision made by the Women's Guild of Arts to arrange a combined exhibit of works of members of the Guild and others, in a small room at the 1916 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society exhibition. Titled a 'Lady's Bed-room', it was led by May Morris, and artwork could be purchased.⁹⁴ This decision shows how diverse and contradictory issues of professionalism during this period could be for women artists, even amongst the Women's Guild of Arts.

At Homes

The Women's Guild of Arts held many studio At Homes, which the archive suggests took place officially at least once every few months, across this period. At Homes were a widespread middle and upper-class ritual in the late-nineteenth century, and began ideologically as a gendered domestic activity for women. The female head of the household would designate time away from domestic duties to entertain guests, on a designated day, once a week. Marion Sambourne discussed a vigorous schedule of At Homes, and these are testament to their regularity: 'Mrs. Alma-Tadema had her at home day on Monday, Mrs. Rider Haggard on Wednesday, Mrs. du Maurier on Thursday, and Mrs. Marcus Stone on Sunday.'⁹⁵ Mary Eliza Haweis also hosted At Homes, in her Chelsea drawing room, and invited eminent speakers such as William Holman Hunt and Lady Jephson.⁹⁶ Lenore Davidoff has suggested At Homes were part of a repressive social model that encouraged the trapping of women within private domestic roles.⁹⁷ The suffragette Evelyn Sharp in her short story *The Other Anna* (1897) shares this view. She released her main character by having her turn her back on her At Home day:

no one who was a bit nice ever called on her At Home day, and that the only interesting people were the people who never called at one at all...and at this point of her reflections she laughed unaccountably, and resolved to give up her At Home day.⁹⁸

This article develops understanding of how the role of At Homes shifted across this period. The ideologically gendered intention behind At Homes became increasingly complicated through lived experience. Deborah Cohen has uncovered that by the 1880s 'at home articles' had become a staple of the periodical press. Reporters would interview notable personalities, adapting the actual hosting of this event to a meeting that could then be transmitted to a mass readership, allowing the general public to voyeuristically imagine they were part of an At Home. Cohen argues the popularity of the 'at home feature' was due to the late Victorian public's 'avid

appetite for celebrity gossip' commenting it was connected to the 'conviction...that the domestic interior expressed its inhabitant's inner self, especially in the case of women.'⁹⁹ Journalists in the art world used similar techniques. *Artists at Home* (1884) published photographs and interviews about male artists in their studios. *The Art Record: A Weekly Illustrated Review of the Arts and Crafts* (1901-1902) continued this trend of interviewing male artists in their studios, under the title 'The Artist at Home.'¹⁰⁰ Crucially these men weren't hosting At Homes; instead they were simply interviewees, the result of a broader public captivation in how the lives of male artists were acted out. These articles are in fact testament to the fact that studios were predominantly envisaged as spaces for male artists to inhabit, through the regular selection of male interviewees. There are examples of women using At Home practice in journals, though these were usually subtly different. Guild members, the sisters, Alice Bolingbroke Woodward and Ellen Caroline Woodward, were noted in *The Studio* as having designed illustrated At Home invitation cards for an At Home exhibition of the women's only club, the 91 Art Club, in 1894. This demonstrates how At Homes were beginning to be appropriated by women artists to host events of a more professional nature.¹⁰¹

Davidoff has argued that though artists were becoming accepted in polite society during this period, part of the charisma of the artist was their perceived rejection of Victorian social conventions (such as At Homes). Artists apparently saw themselves as 'outsiders, foreign to normal society.'¹⁰² She supports this with a quotation from the period that states: 'Curious that there should be men, who never enter a drawing-room, or leave a card, or make a formal call...'¹⁰³ Davidoff points out it states 'men' and doesn't mention women, again confirming a lack of contemporary public acceptance of women as artists, and she sees this as evidence that male artists did not tend to worry about social etiquette dictating their daily life. However, evidence of the use of At Homes by artists of both sexes for professional means can be found in *The Art Record*. In 1901 it stated that 'Studio At Homes were general all over London last Sunday' and references male and female artists.¹⁰⁴ It is important to note that these specific examples of studio At Homes took place on a Sunday, and were on the same page connected to Show Sundays, which were an established annual, not weekly, event. The article is also dated a month before the 1901 opening of the Royal Academy Annual Exhibition, suggesting that At Homes represented the practice as a form of Show Sunday, an annual event, instead of the more traditional reliance on weekly domestic At Homes. It is impossible to glean from this article how regularly artists of both sexes engaged in this practice. It does reveal that male artists central to the art scene may have been more concerned with etiquette, particularly for important events, than previously thought. Later in the article it details specifically the male artists who refused to admit 'the casual visitors' of Show Sunday. These examples show that many artists, who were central to the art scene, were, instead of rejecting social conventions, were reforming these to

create their own modes of professionalism. Complexly within this, the original gendered natures of At Homes are further problematised and blurred.

The At Home cards found in the Women's Guild of Arts archive provide a rare detailed example of how the domestic practice of hosting At Homes, could be adapted for artistic work related gatherings in studios. The cards could be slipped into pockets, added to letters, and placed on hall tables when making visits. One glance conjured a vast network of artistic sociability. An artist asked to speak in 1917, specifically asked for cards 'to send to her friends so that they may come.'¹⁰⁵ The cards mention parties, lectures and demonstrations organised collectively as a Guild, individual events, and occasional At Homes with marriage partners, which shows again male involvement in this practice. [Figure 5] is more explicitly private in tone, 'a private exhibition of the work of the Women's Guild of Arts.' [Figure 6] is an At Home, for Women's Guild of Arts member Emily Ford to meet 'Mrs. Fawcett' to have coffee, cigarettes, and to discuss 'Women's Suffrage.' The cards often explicitly state At Home, but the Guild also used cards to advertise the next years meetings, to vote on whether they should host private exhibitions or not (members could circle yes or no, then return the card), and to advertise group visits to places such as the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Annual Report of 1911 demonstrates this amalgamation of domestic, social and professional activity:

Miss Emily Ford led off with a party at her studio! A dinner was arranged [sic] kindly arranged by Miss Emily Rowe followed by a visit to the Persian pottery collection conducted by Miss May Morris, and a party at which all the members present showed examples of their work, was given by Miss. E. C. and Miss A. B. Woodward at their studio.¹⁰⁶

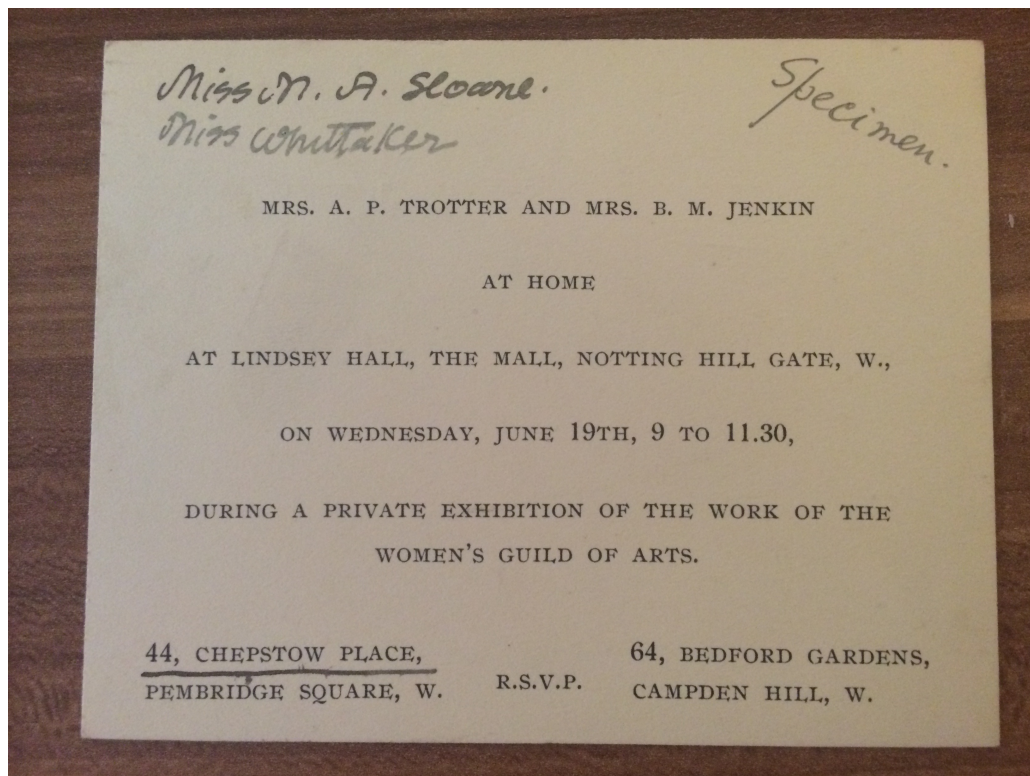


Figure 5. At Home card for 'A private exhibition of the Women's Guild of Arts.'
With kind thanks to the William Morris Society

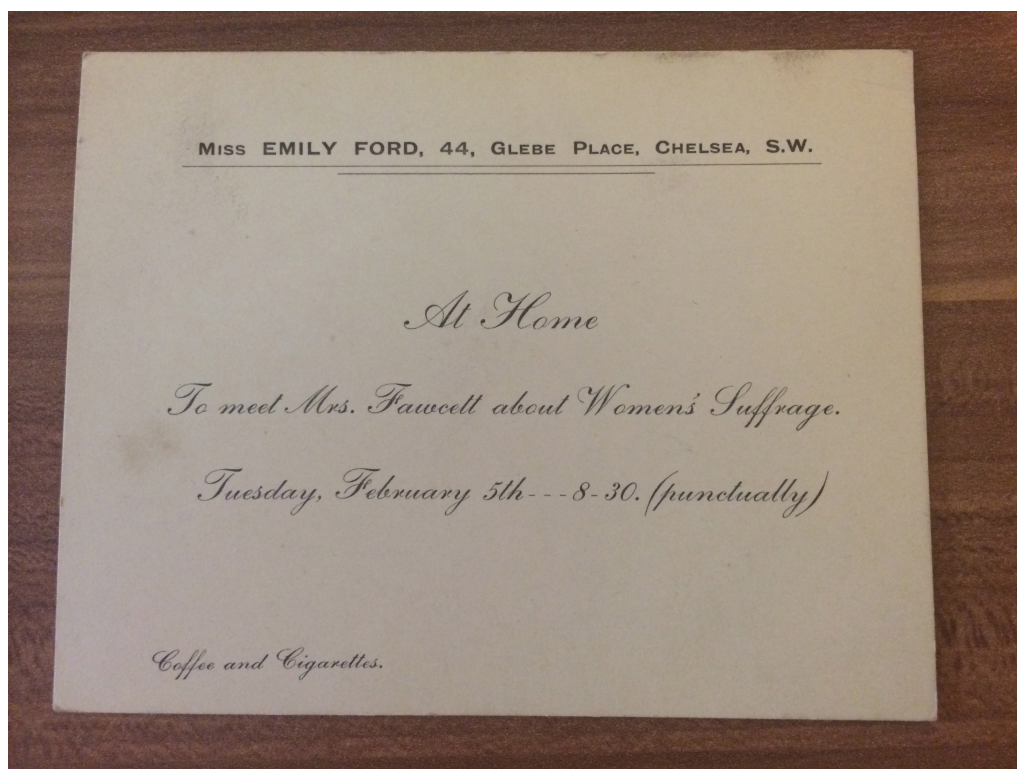


Figure 6. At Home card for Miss Emily Ford to meet Mrs. Fawcett 'about Women's Suffrage.'
With kind thanks to the William Morris Society

For women artists, already dealing with inherent and inextricable gendered tensions, At Homes may have reestablished women artists with perceived feminine and domestic personas, yet for male artists, who appear to have been less reliant on regular At Homes, (using them occasionally, or through being interviewed); they did not have the same connotations. Arguably the Women's Guild of Arts extensive reliance on regular At Homes might have subsumed their professional activities into their activities as middle-class women. Their dependence on At Homes amidst trepidations about their respectability as artists may have exacerbated their separation from male artists, who were part of a broader masculine artisan culture, through the Royal Academy, and in the male-only art clubs and societies littered across the city. Sara Delamont has discussed the constant need of women to be perceived as still feminine in the growing educational institutions of this period: 'No whisper of impropriety, masculinity or lowered standards must sully the occupants of educational institutions, or the whole cause could be lost.'¹⁰⁷ Delamont's term 'double conformity' resonates with the Women's Guild of Arts behaviour. Women had to make concerted efforts to achieve professional careers, negotiating their professionalism amidst societal tensions about perceived appropriate roles for women, adjusting and maintaining etiquette techniques for their own professional gain, while dealing with the changing status of artists and the applied arts in society.

It is crucial to understand however that the cyclical repetition and ritualistic structure of At Homes in studios also helped in the formation of a professional, and respectable artistic identity in a period where norms for women in the workplace had not been cemented. Studios provided the opportunity for those Guild members who wished to discover patrons and buyers for their work. Furthermore studios and At Homes facilitated artistic and personal relationships to flourish, enabling women to acceptably invite a range of literary, musical, and artistic characters into their private homes and, if they had the financial and practical means, as the majority of Women's Guild of Arts members did, into their studios. At Homes may have been repressive in their initial gendered ideology, but in lived experience, they provided a space in which to subvert this. The personal agency of artists such as Pamela Colman Smith, who preferred to call her regular events 'parties', evidences the ways women negotiated societal expectations for their own needs, and also the heterogeneity of the experiences of women artists.

To conclude, this article has shown how studios helped women to delineate their professional status as artists in London c.1880 - 1925. It has explored the significance studios had in physically placing women into the heart of the artistic community. Financial resources and familial and artistic associations were critical factors in obtaining these spaces. Both male and female professionals used studios to build prestige, but research into the Women's Guild of Arts reveals persistent concerns about the spatial nature of their collective activity. This was

something they felt was intimately connected to their gender. Members modified the domestic convention of At Homes for their own form of professionalism and expressed concern about the most appropriate ways to interact with different spaces such as studios, drawing rooms and exhibitions. 9 St. Paul's Studio functioned as an art gallery, exhibition hall and lecture theatre for invited members, but this knowledge is now only visible through the recently discovered cards and letters belonging to the Women's Guild of Arts. This space was designed with cultural ideals of the bachelor artist in mind, yet was appropriated by a Guild of women. Such archives are a useful reminder of the need to consider the wide-ranging ways that women negotiated their professional careers during this period.

Notes

¹ Guild member, the painter, Maud Beddington rented 9 St. Paul's Studio across this period.

² The Women's Guild of Arts Archive, henceforth WGAA, (1907 - exact date unknown but c.1940) is deposited at the William Morris Society, Hammersmith. Archival material belonging to the longstanding Hon. Secretary, the painter and etcher Mary A. Sloane, was discovered in 2011. This partial record of its activity consists of: At Home cards, Annual Reports, Meeting Minutes, letters, loose papers, sketches, ephemera. This is the first article to publish about its contents.

³ Jan Marsh has lamented the loss of the Women's Guild of Arts archive, and the subsequent lack of knowledge about its 'parallel, if now shadowy, existence alongside the Art Workers' Guild.' She described this loss as an 'apt symbol for the erasure of women in histories of the movement.' (2002) Jan Marsh 'May Morris: ubiquitous, invisible Arts and Crafts-woman' in Bridget Elliott and Janice Helland (Surrey: Ashgate) *The Gender of Ornament: Women Artists and the Decorative Arts 1880-1935*, p. 45.

⁴ Secretary's Report 1908 WGAA.

⁵ Annual Report 1913 WGAA.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Early draft of Annual Report 1912 WGAA.

⁸ Mary Seton Watt's role in the Guild was minimal. She even sent a letter 'expressing her regret at her frequent inability to attend meetings.' Studio committee meeting 27 November 1912. Minute book 1913-1917. WGAA.

⁹ Jane Morris had little involvement in the Guild. While there was tactical emphasis in getting renowned women to join to increase the Guild's prestige their actual participation was often limited. A note in the archive states 'It is quite good to have a figure-head President, as well as the working officers. But it will probably mean that when Mrs. Watts resigns or dies Miss Morris will be shoved up there, so do not limit the function of the President.'

¹⁰ Anthea Callen (1984-1985) 'Sexual Division of Labor in the Arts and Crafts Movement', *Woman's Art Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 6.

¹¹ Martha Vicinus has disbanded clichés about a homogenous Victorian womanhood (1978) *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women* (London: Routledge) also Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair (2003) *Public Lives: Women, Family, and Society in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

¹² Clarissa Campbell Orr (Ed.) (1995) *Women in the Victorian Art World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland (Eds.) (2006) *Local/Global: Women Artists in the Nineteenth Century* (Surrey: Ashgate), Griselda Pollock (1988) *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge), Lynne Walker (2002) 'Home and Away: The Feminist Mapping of Public and Private Space in Victorian London' in Iain Borden, Joe Kerr, Jane Rendell, Alicia Pivaro (Eds.) *The Unknown City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press).

¹³ Caroline Dakers (1999) *The Holland Park Circle: Artists and Victorian Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press) also Charlotte Gere (2014) *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic Movement* (London: V&A Publishing).

¹⁴ Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland (Eds.) *Local/Global*, p. 4.

¹⁵ Patricia E. C. Croot (Ed.) (2004) 'Settlement and building: Artists and Chelsea', *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 12: Chelsea*, pp. 102-106.

¹⁶ Census record for 1921.

¹⁷ Nicola Moorby (Undated) Her Indoors: Women Artists and Depictions of the Domestic Interior, Tate Online research publications.

¹⁸ Estella Canziani (1939) *Round about Three Palace Green* (London: Methuen) p. 71.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

-
- ²⁰ Elise Lawton Smith (2002) *Evelyn Pickering De Morgan and the Allegorical Body* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press) pp. 24 -25.
- ²¹ (February 1910) 'Recent Designs in Domestic Architecture: Sir George Frampton's new house in St. John's Wood' *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*, pp. 213-18.
- ²² Rose Barton (1904) *Familiar London* (London: Adam & Charles Black) p. 85.
- ²³ *Ibid.* pp. 85 – 86.
- ²⁴ Elizabeth Crawford (2000) *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guild 1866-1928* (London: Routledge) p. 226.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 224.
- ²⁶ Croot (Ed.) 'Settlement and building: Artists and Chelsea', p. 102.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 102.
- ²⁸ Margaret Wright's diary, private collection, Canada. Referenced by Jan Marsh in the Oxford DNB article for Kate Bunce.
- ²⁹ Nicola Moorby (Undated) Her Indoors: Women Artists and Depictions of the Domestic Interior, Tate Online research publications.
- ³⁰ Roberta White (2005) *A Studio of One's Own: Fictional Women Painters and the Art of Fiction* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press), p.16.
- ³¹ Rhoda Bickerdike (1988) 'The Dawson's: An Equal Partnership of Artists', *Apollo: The International Magazine of the Arts*, p. 322.
- ³² *Ibid.* p. 323.
- ³³ Private collection of S. R. Kaplan.
- ³⁴ Arthur Ransome (1907) *Bohemia in London* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company) p. 57.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 57-58.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 58.
- ³⁷ Rose Barton, *Familiar London*, p. 83.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 83.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 196.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 87-88.
- ⁴¹ Estella Canziani, *Round about Three Palace Green*, p. 4.
- ⁴² Shirley Nicholson (1998) *A Victorian Household* (Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited) p. 57.
- ⁴³ Estella Canziani, *Round about Three Palace Green*, p.4.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 69.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 71-72
- ⁴⁶ Ransome, *Bohemia in London*, p. 82.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 59
- ⁴⁸ Ransome, Rupert Hart-Davis (Ed.) (1976) *The Autobiography of Arthur Ransome* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd), p. 156.
- ⁴⁹ Agatha Hilliam Bowley (1972) *A memoir of Professor Sir Arthur Bowley (1869-1957) and his family* (privately published), p. 53.
- ⁵⁰ Rose Barton, *Familiar London*, p. 87.
- ⁵¹ Letter dated 27 February 1923. Julia Alsop to Mary A. Sloane. WGAA
- ⁵² Estella Canziani, *Round about Three Palace Green*, p. 24.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 24.
- ⁵⁴ Shirley Nicholson, *A Victorian Household*, pp. 14-15.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 173.
- ⁵⁶ Nicola Moorby (Undated) Her Indoors: Women Artists and Depictions of the Domestic Interior, Tate Online research publications.
- ⁵⁷ Roger Station (2008) *Dorothy Woollard and the etching revival* (London: The Pegasus Press Limited).
- ⁵⁸ Document titled 'Eve Simmonds: a personal account compiled from conversations and letters to Heather and Robin Tanner.' 1971. Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.
- ⁵⁹ Document titled 'A taped conversation with John Gwynne, of Quenington, Gloucestershire on the subject of William and Eve Simmonds.' 1980. Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.
- ⁶⁰ Helena Gleichen (1940, Reprinted 2013) *Contacts and Contrasts*, (Kilkerran: Mansion Field), p. 31.
- ⁶¹ Elizabeth Crawford (2002) *Enterprising Women: The Garrett's and their Circle* (London: Francis Boutle Publishers) p.194. Emma Ferry's doctoral thesis discussed Guild member Agnes and her cousin Rhoda Garrett in detail (2004) 'Advice, Authorship and the Domestic Interior: An interdisciplinary Study on Macmillan's 'Art at Home Series' 1876-1883,' Kingston University.
- ⁶² Estella Canziani, *Round about Three Palace Green*, p. 25.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 55.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 25.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 60.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 61.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 35.
- ⁶⁸ Annual Meeting document, 5 December 1912. WGAA.
- ⁶⁹ Annual Report 1913 WGAA
- ⁷⁰ Studio committee meeting 27 November 1912. Minute Book 1913-1917. WGAA. The members who immediately resigned were: Mary Sargant Florence, Emily Ford, Ruby Winifred Bailey, Edith Brearey Dawson, M. V. Wheelhouse, and

Alice B. Woodward and her sister E. C. Woodward. Other members resigned over the next year, but it is not possible to determine their motivations for this.

⁷¹ Letter dated 5 February 1908. Edith Brearey Dawson to May Morris. WGAA.

⁷² From 1917 the Women's Guild of Arts and the Art Workers' Guild also began to host occasional 'joint meetings.' The first of these took place on 19 January 1917 with May Morris discussing 'William Morris' and presided over by Mary Seton Watts. From 1920 the Art Worker's Guild also began to host 'Ladies' Nights.'

⁷³ Annual Report 1912. Letter from Massé to Mary A. Sloane 28 July 1921. WGAA.

⁷⁴ Letter dated 20 January 1917. Phyllis Gardner to Mary A. Sloane. WGAA.

⁷⁵ Letter dated 5 February 1908. Edith Brearey Dawson to May Morris. WGAA.

⁷⁶ Katy Deepwell has researched women's painting groups in London and has shown that women painters relied on holding artistically focused meetings in women's only clubs in the city. Katy Deepwell (2010) *Women Artists Between the Wars: 'A Fair Field and No Favour'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

⁷⁷ Annual Report 1910 WGAA.

⁷⁸ Annual Report 1912 WGAA.

⁷⁹ Members of the committee, who met more regularly, also often held committee meetings at their own homes, and studios.

⁸⁰ Document discussing meeting held at 8 Hammersmith Terrace. 10 January 1913. WGAA

⁸¹ Letter dated 16 December 1915. Maud Beddington to Mary A. Sloane. WGAA

⁸² Letter dated 27 December 1923. Julia Alsop to Mary A. Sloane. WGAA

⁸³ Letter dated 10 Aug (year unknown). E. K. Martyn letter to Estella Canziani. WGAA.

⁸⁴ Letter dated 5 February 1908. Edith Brearey Dawson to May Morris. WGAA.

⁸⁵ When it came to physically presenting members works to each other, the issue of time and light could differ. Mrs. Mackail at 6 Pembroke Gardens in Kensington suggested a meeting to view her works at 'the earliest possible hour on account of day light.' Letter dated 27 October 1922. Mrs. Mackail to Mary A. Sloane. WGAA.

⁸⁶ Estella Canziani, p. 53.

⁸⁷ Letter dated 19 January 1925. WGAA

⁸⁸ An example of this can be found in the seven members who identified as stained glass window makers on a paper version of the Roll. They all at some point collaborated with, or held studios, at Guild member Mary Lowndes's The Glass House stained glass workshop in Fulham.

⁸⁹ Letter (pre 1914) from Christiana Herringham and May Morris to the Secretary of the Women's Section of the National Scottish Exhibition. WGAA.

⁹⁰ Edith Brearey Dawson, 4 January 1908 letter to May Morris. WGAA.

⁹¹ Edith Brearey Dawson, 4 January 1908 letter to May Morris. WGAA.

⁹² Annual Report 1914. WGAA

⁹³ Early draft of Annual Report 1912. WGAA.

⁹⁴ Letter dated July 1916 invited members of the Women's Guild of Arts to be involved. WGAA.

⁹⁵ Shirley Nicholson, *A Victorian Household*, p. 53.

⁹⁶ Bea Howe (1967) *Arbiter of Elegance* (London: Harvill Press) p. 16.

⁹⁷ Lenore Davidoff discusses At Home etiquette in detail (1986) *The Best Circles* (London: Ebury Press) p. 42, p. 49, p. 67, p. 74, pp. 87- 88.

⁹⁸ Evelyn Sharp (1897) 'The Other Anna', in Harriet Devine Jump (Ed.) (1998) *Nineteenth Century Short Stories by Women: A Routledge Anthology* (London: Routledge), p. 383.

⁹⁹ Deborah Cohen (2006) *Household Gods: A History of the British and their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 123.

¹⁰⁰ Thanks to Heidi Egginton, Cambridge University, for alerting me to this publication.

¹⁰¹ (June 1894) *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*, p. 96.

¹⁰² Lenore Davidoff (1986) *The Best Circles* (London: Ebury Press), p.78.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 78.

¹⁰⁴ (6 April 1901), *The Art Record: A Weekly Illustrated Review of the Arts and Crafts*, p. 104.

¹⁰⁵ Letter dated 20 January 1917. Phyllis Gardner to Mary A. Sloane. WGAA

¹⁰⁶ Annual Report 1911. WGAA

¹⁰⁷ Sara Delamont (1978) 'The Domestic Ideology and Women's Education', in Sara Delamont (Ed.) *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: her cultural and physical world* (London: Croom Helm), p. 146.